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The President's Daily Brief

11 December 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

11 December 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Egyptian and Syrian leaders are meeting in Cairo to prepare for the opening of the Geneva peace conference. The Israelis are moving to halt a spate of terrorist activities on the West Bank. *(Page 1)*

In Cambodia, agreement apparently has been reached on naming Foreign Minister Long Boret as the new prime minister. *(Page 2)*

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Soviets

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(Page 3)

The Dutch Government has asked for emergency powers to deal with economic disruptions caused by the oil crisis. *(Page 4)*

Notes on Venezuelan election returns and Brandt's trip to Prague appear on *Page 5*.

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Syrian President Asad arrived in Cairo yesterday to consult with Sadat on a strategy for the Geneva peace conference. A lower ranking Syrian delegation has been in Egypt for the past few days. Asad went to Cairo directly from Tripoli, where he had talked with Qadhafi for two days. This suggests that he may also hope to ease the strained relations between the Egyptian and Libyan leaders.

Egypt's opening presentation to the peace conference will have a significant bearing on the outcome of the Knesset elections on December 31, according to well-placed members of Prime Minister Meir's Labor Party. Sources of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv have stressed that a "moderate and constructive" Egyptian statement would greatly help the party by indicating that the conference could lead to a viable peace settlement. Conversely, an Egyptian presentation of "non-negotiable" demands would enable the opposition Likud coalition to characterize Israeli participation in the conference as a surrender to international pressures.

Israel, meanwhile, has taken severe measures to counter the recent surge in terrorist activity on the West Bank. According to press reports, Tel Aviv yesterday deported to Jordan eight Arab residents, including a mayor and a member of the Islamic Council in Jerusalem, for allegedly urging cooperation with guerrillas. Also, for the first time in four years Israeli authorities imposed a curfew in Nablus, the West Bank's major city, where the Israeli military governor was attacked last Saturday.

Military activity on both fronts was primarily limited to exchanges of small-arms fire yesterday.

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CAMBODIA

Chargé Enders reports that High Political Council members Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, and Cheng Heng agreed yesterday that Cambodia's talented Foreign Minister Long Boret should replace In Tam as prime minister. The country's two major political parties have also approved Boret, who has no political base of his own. Lon Nol reportedly has already cabled Boret in New York, asking him to return to Phnom Penh to form a new government.

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If Boret accepts, he probably will head a smaller cabinet with a broad political base. Some haggling over the filling of cabinet positions is likely, but government leaders appear determined to install the new government without any inordinate delay.

In an effort to improve the government's overall performance and to reduce tension between civilian and military officials, the council is to begin meeting on important problems with the new prime minister and army commander in chief Fernandez. Lon Nol is also claiming that he will give the new government greater authority than that exercised by the outgoing In Tam administration.

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NETHERLANDS

Prime Minister Den Uyl's coalition government has asked parliament for emergency powers for one year to deal with economic disruptions caused by the oil crisis.

Opponents as well as dissidents within the coalition have now muted their criticism of government policy and appear reluctant to make political capital out of the crisis. Most political leaders sense the need for unity and are inclined to follow public opinion, which remains strongly pro-Israel. Recent efforts by the Foreign Ministry to change the tone of Dutch policy more to the liking of Arab governments produced several gaffes in public relations, but no oil.

In alleviating the oil shortage, the Dutch will continue to look, for the near term, to the US. The Hague is grateful for the assurances given at this week's NATO ministerial meeting that the US and West Germany would meet the fuel needs of the Dutch Air Force and Navy.

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NOTES

Venezuela: The latest unofficial returns from the presidential balloting on Sunday shows Democratic Action's Carlos Andres Perez with an increasing lead over Lorenzo Fernandez, the governing Social Christian party nominee. The two major parties appear to be winning about 65-70 percent of the total presidential vote, a major gain over their total in 1968 and a possible indication that a two-party system may be emerging. The makeup of the new congress will not be known until later in the week.

West Germany - Czechoslovakia: Chancellor Brandt and Foreign Minister Scheel begin a two-day visit to Prague today to sign the "reconciliation" treaty and to establish diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia. Bonn hopes to follow up this achievement quickly and to establish full diplomatic relations with Bulgaria and Hungary before the end of the year.

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